

## **Preparations for the 1999 WTO Ministerial Conference**

Preparations for the Ministerial meeting were the responsibility of the WTO's General Council, meeting in special session, under the direction of Chairman John Weekes of Canada, followed by Chairman Ali Mchumo of Tanzania, and Director-General Mike Moore, after his appointment on September 1, 1999. All WTO Members were free to participate in the preparations. The Council received 235 submissions from Members during the course of its preparations for the Ministerial, covering all the major trade issues of concern to Members.

The General Council then systematically reviewed the issues, as called for in the Ministerial Declaration of May 1998, focusing on: (i) implementation of existing agreements; (ii) the mandated negotiations; (iii) work mandated under existing agreements and decisions taken; (iv) any recommendations on the work program agreed at the Singapore Ministerial Meeting in 1996; (v) recommendations on the follow-up to the High Level Meeting for the Least Developed Countries; and (vi) other matters proposed and agreed by Members.

These preparations were conducted in three phases. First, from September 1998 to February of 1999, WTO Members engaged in an issue identification process. Second, from February 1999 through July, they tabled specific negotiating proposals. Finally, from September 1999 to the actual Ministerial Conference, they worked to draft a Ministerial Declaration for consideration and adoption by Ministers. In order to conduct the preparations in a much more open and transparent fashion, the WTO for the first time used its website to publish proposals submitted by delegations (169 of the 235 proposals were submitted by delegations as derestricted documents).

The United States was an active participant in the preparations for the Ministerial, submitting proposals in phases one and two, and drafting proposals for Declaration text in the course of informal consultations that began in the fall of 1999.

### **Proposals Tabled by the United States**

- < Advancing the WTO's Contribution to Trade Facilitation
- < Agriculture-Biotechnology
- < Agriculture-Domestic Support
- < Agriculture-Export Competition
- < Agriculture-Market Access
- < Agriculture- Objective and Overall Framework
- < Fisheries Subsidies
- < Further Negotiations As Mandated by the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
- < Implementation Issues (two proposals)
- < Mandated Negotiations and the Built-in Agenda
- < Non-industrial Market Access
- < Singapore Work Program Issues and Other Issues of Concern to Members: Industrial Market Access, Trade and Labor, Trade and Environment, Transparency and Openness, and Technical Assistance
- < Technical Assistance/Capacity Building (original and revised proposals)
- < Trade and Sustainable Development
- < Trade and Labor
- < Transparency in Government Procurement (proposal and draft text)
- < Transparency in WTO Work